

Teaching and learning

The most recent assessment by the Higher Education Funding Council for England rated the standard of teaching in the School as 'excellent' – the highest possible grade.

2014 National Student Survey "94% of students said that staff were good at explaining things"

The Learning environment

As a Birmingham student your degree will run on a modular basis. You can expect to learn in lectures, tutorials and practical classes, as well as by reading around the subjects using Birmingham's extensive library facilities.

In the video below our Geography students talk about Learning and Living at the University of Birmingham

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

[Video transcript here \(/accessibility/transcripts/les/Learning-living-at-Birmingham.aspx\)](#)

Dedicated facilities for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences students are also available including:

- [the Earth Imaging Lab \(take a 360° tour\) \(/schools/gees/facilities/360tours/index.aspx\)](#)
- [the Map Library \(/schools/gees/facilities/map-library/index.aspx\)](#)
- and the [Lapworth Museum of Geology \(take a 360° tour\) \(/schools/gees/facilities/360tours/lapworth.aspx\)](#) - which houses the finest and most extensive collections of fossils, minerals and rocks in the Midlands.

Modules involve both individual and group project work, and fieldwork is an integral aspect of all our degree programmes. You will learn to work under your own initiative and as part of a team. As your degree progresses, the modular system allows you greater choice and flexibility. This enables you to follow the subject areas that interest you most and build up a personal profile to equip you for future employment.

Transferable skills

All our degree programmes will provide you with the transferable skills essential in future employment. However, the skills you acquire can easily be applied to a wide variety of other careers. All our students learn computer skills and how to collect, evaluate and interpret data.

Equally importantly, you will learn how to present information both by giving oral presentations and producing professional quality reports, whilst field training gives you self-reliance and teamwork skills that are highly valued by employers. Our graduates all have a perspective that encompasses the global, regional and local environment, another trait that is extremely useful in future employment.

Assessment

Assessment typically involves an essay, project or practical work together with an examination. Each module is assessed separately and typically involves a combination of examination and practical work or projects. Exams are held in May, with results in the late summer. First year exams are for qualifying only and do not count towards your degree grade, but all exams taken in later years do count towards the final result. We place a strong emphasis on individual project work including your dissertation and the results of this significantly influence the degree grade you achieve. You will be assigned a supervisor to advise and support you throughout your project.



Fieldwork

Fieldwork is an essential element of our undergraduate, postgraduate and research courses. It is a vital part of your training and the staff at Birmingham have considerable experience of researching geographical issues using field evidence.

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest](#)

[Video transcript here](#)

[\(/accessibility/transcripts/les/fieldwork-geography-environmental-science.aspx\)](#) See also - **[Fieldwork: Geology and Earth Sciences video](#)**
[\(/schools/gees/courses/undergraduate/fieldwork.aspx#geology\)](#)

In the first year in all our degree programmes, you will have the chance to attend a short field course in the local region where, depending on your subject of study, you will be introduced to a range of survey and sampling techniques. This is a great opportunity to not only get to experience field work first hand but to also get to know your fellow students by living and working with them as a team.

In the second and third years, you will choose field courses according to your area of interest and specialism and will have to chance to travel further afield. Some of our past trips have included visits to Portugal, Malta, Tenerife and European cities including Amsterdam, Moscow and Berlin.

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